

Author

St. Peter's UCC

Title

History of St. Peter's United Church of
Christ. Greensboro, North Carolina.

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HISTORY OF ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Greensboro, N. C.

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HISTORY OF ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Greensboro, N. C.

During the summer of 1957 a group of laymen living in the Forest Hills development, a new and growing section in the Northeast part of Greensboro, became interested in establishing a new church in their community. After making a spot survey of the new families, they decided to investigate the possibilities of starting a new mission of the United Church of Christ since there were several Evangelical and Reformed and Congregational Christian families living in the community. These two denominations were at the time renewing their interest in the process of merging to form the United Church of Christ.

On August 25, 1957 a meeting of seventeen interested people was held at the Bessemer Elementary School. The Rev. Hoy Fesperman, Pastor of the First E. & R. Church, Greensboro, acted as chairman and Dr. W. E. Wisseman, Pastor of the First C. C. Church led the group in prayer. Those assembled decided to overture the Committee on National Missions of the Southern Synod to organize a new mission in Greensboro. At a later meeting held jointly by the Missions Committees of the Southern Convention and the Southern Synod, Dr. Wisseman and Rev. Fesperman were appointed to look after the new project at Forest Hills. The Bessemer Elementary School was secured as a meeting place and services were begun in November of that year. The first Church School was held on November 3 with forty present. Dr. Wisseman agreed to supply the pulpit on the second and fourth Sundays of each month and various other ministers and laymen would supply on the other Sundays. This arrangement continued until the arrival of the first full time pastor.

In December of 1957, the Board of National Missions purchased a

two acre tract of land on Phillips Avenue for \$4,000. This land was to become the church site and would be taken over by the Mission church when it became strong enough to pay for it. In March of 1958 a five room house across the street from the church site was purchased by the same board for a parsonage. Two rooms were added to the house bringing the total cost to \$14,000. Not yet five months old, this new church found itself in debt to the amount of \$18,000. However, they were firmly convinced that God was leading them to establish a church in this community and so they proceeded with faith that He would provide a way.

They issued a call to the Rev. Carl Daye, an E. & R. Minister of the Southern Synod to become their first full time Pastor. Believing that God was leading him for a definite service in Greensboro, he accepted the call and began his work on June 1, 1958. The Board of National Missions of the E. & R. Church, the Board of Home Missions of the C. C. Churches, and the Missions Committee of the Southern Convention agreed to support the new mission in a financial way—each board was to share equally in the support. The aid was to be \$5,000 through 1959, to be reduced to \$4,500 in 1960, to \$4,000 in 1961, to \$3,000 in 1962, to \$1,500 in 1963 with the expectation that by January 1, 1964 the new church would become self-supporting.

During the summer and fall of 1958, the church continued to make fine progress. On July 6, the Congregation voted to name the new mission St. Peter's United Church of Christ and in July the charter was opened. On October 5, 1958 the church was officially organized with 61 charter members, the Pastor was elected, and the first Consistory (the name chosen for the official board) was elected.

The rest of that year and 1959 was spent in seeking out new members and getting the church well organized. The women were the first lay group to be organized and they chose as their name "The Church Women's Fellowship." The men soon organized a "Churchmen's Fellowship" and the young people a "Youth Fellowship." Under the direction of the Mission Boards, ten study committees were appointed to study the needs of the church and community looking forward to the building of the first unit of the new church. On July 14, 1959 a building committee was appointed to make plans for the first building. These committees worked hard and on January 24, 1960 Mr. Robert Peterson, architect of Greensboro, was employed to draw up the plans for the new church. In June of 1960, Mr. Roy Timm of the Board of National Missions spent a week with the congregation and directed a very successful capital funds campaign. A goal of \$15,000 in three year pledges was set and when all the pledges were in \$18,000 had been raised. During the year the congregation experienced many ups and downs in trying to get plans ready to build. The lowest moment came in November when the bids were opened and found to be far more than had been anticipated; the lowest bid being \$18,000 more than the projected \$60,000 building.

In spite of this disappointment, the year ended with the congregation looking forward optimistically to 1961 with the high hope of starting a church building. There are now 89 members and 129 are enrolled in the church school. The community continues to grow and the future of the church looks bright.



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